

CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THE DECORATION OF THE TILED STOVES IN SERBIA – TILED STOVES IN THE BISHOP'S CABINET IN THE BISHOP'S PALACE IN VRŠAC¹

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<https://doi.org/10.18485/smartart.2022.2.ch4>

Abstract: The Bishop's Palace in Vršac is one of the most representative episcopal residences of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci. It was built by the educated, enterprising and very capable Bishop of Vršac, Jovan Georgijević, between 1756 and 1763. The Palace underwent its first renovation during the time of Patriarch Josif Rajačić between 1833 and 1843, while in the 20th century this magnificent building underwent another renovation during the episcopate of Gavriilo Zmejanović (1896–1920), when its exterior was equipped with luxury furniture. The Bishop's Palace in Vršac treasures numerous valuable artworks. Apart from the representative portraits of the bishops who prayed, lived and worked here, this Palace, more precisely the Bishop's cabinet, is embellished with whitetiled stoves, which are adorned with unusual representations of dolphins. The paper discusses the iconography of dolphins, and the historical development of this type of representation through different periods and in different techniques, in order to reveal the reasons for their placement on the front part of tiled stoves in Vršac. Among other things, in the same sense, the paper deals with the dolphin motif in different media of arts, and special emphasis is placed on the decoration of the fireplaces. The article also discusses tiled stoves, their history and appearance in Europe and Serbia in recent times. Based on the above-said, it is concluded that the appearance of dolphins on tiled stoves in Vršac is the result of the sophistication of the environment that ordered the tiled stoves, the fruit of the delicate spiritual aspirations of bishop Gavriilo Zmejanović who worked and lived in this

¹ This paper was written as a result of the research conducted within the project "Serbian Medieval Art and Its European Context" (no 177036) of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

I dedicate it to the eternal memory of my dear and close colleague Miroslava-Mima Kostić, the senior research associate at the Institute of Art (Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade) whose goodness, enthusiasm and advices will stay in my heart forever.

I express my gratitude to Mr Miodrag Kališki and to father Nedeljko Vasiljević from the Bishop's Palace in Vršac who kindly gave me the opportunity to enter the Bishop's Palace and to photograph one of the white tiled stoves with the motifs of dolphins.

most solemn chamber of the Bishop's Palace, as well as the fruit of the long tradition dating back to the distant past. Finally, the paper concludes that the appearance of dolphins in the Palace of the spiritual dignitaries of the highest rank stays in line with the long tradition of depicting this motif. In accordance with the current possibilities, the paper also brings data about the time of the manufacturing of the tiled stoves (c. 1910), their transfer to the Bishop's Palace in Vršac, and bishop Gavriilo Zmejanović, who commissioned them.

Keywords: the Bishop's Palace, Vršac, Gavriilo Zmejanović, tiled stoves, decoration, dolphins, meaning.

INTRODUCTION

The Bishop's Palace in Vršac is one of the most representative bishop's residences in the entire Metropolitanate of Karlovci, which in no way lagged behind the Bishop's residence in Karlovci (Fig. 1).² It was built in the 18th century by the enterprising and very capable Bishop of Vršac, Jovan Georgijević (1769–1773).³ The construction of the Palace took seven years, between 1756 and 1763. The difficult history of this episcopal see was reflected consequently in the renovations of the Episcopal Palace itself, which was the center of numerous turbulent events. The Palace underwent its first renovation during the time of Patriarch Josif Rajačić between 1833 and 1843, at a time when the eparchy of Vršac was the richest eparchy of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci.⁴ At the end of the 19th century, Bishop Nektarije Dimitrijević renovated the Palace, his special sense of beauty coming into play, so the completely dilapidated residence underwent a transformation in his time, taking a magnificent appearance. Bishop Nektarije also paid special attention to the Palace's gardens.⁵ In the 20th century, this magnificent building underwent another renovation during the episcopate of Gavriilo Zmejanović (1896–1920).⁶ This Palace treasures numerous valuable artifacts. Its interior was created gradually and is, thus, connected to different epochs, which gives the Palace and its interior a special value. In addition to the representative portraits of the bishops who prayed, worked and

2 М. Тимотијевић, „Архијерејске резиденције”, у: М. Тимотијевић, *Рађање модерне приватности. Приватни животи Срба у Хабзбуршкој монархији краја 17. до почетка 19. века*, Београд, 2006, 476.

3 For the bishop of Vršac Jovan Georgijević, see А. Гавриловић, „О украсу омофора владике вршачког Јована Георгијевића на његовом портрету од Јохана Михаила Вагнера (1765) и о његовом значењу”, у: *Богословље и духовни животи Карловачке митрополије. Година В. Богословље и духовни животи Карловачке митрополије у оквиру 800 година аутокефалије Српске православне цркве. Зборник радова са научној скупштини Београд – Нови Сад, 16–17. децембар 2019*, ур. В. Вукашиновић, П. Перић, Београд, 2020, 212–214 (with further bibliography).

4 Еп. С. Вуковић, *Српски јерарси од деветијој до двадесетијој века*, Београд – Подгорица – Крагујевац 1996, 260; Ј. Стојановић, „Вршачка богословија за време епископа вршачког Јосипа Рајачића (1833–1842)”, у: *Патријарх Јосиф Рајачић. Зборник радова*, ур. Р. Поповић, Д. Микавица, Сремски Карловци – Београд, 2017, 50.

5 Ф. Милекер, *Прошлости српско-православној владичанстви у Вршачкој*, Нови Сад, 1891, 55; for bishop Nektarije Dimitrijević v. „Српски Сион”, Сремски Карловци, 26. новембар 1895 (бр. 47), 771–772; „Српски Сион”, Сремски Карловци, 3. децембар 1895 (бр. 48), 788–790; Еп. Вуковић, *Српски јерарси*, 347.

6 For bishop Gavriilo Zmejanović v. infra.



Fig. 1

lived here, this Palace, more precisely the Bishop's Cabinet, is furnished with white tiled stoves, which are adorned with unusual representations of dolphins, and which are the subject of the present paper (Figs. 2–5). The question of the chronology of these tiled stoves, as well as numerous other issues, such as their origin, have never been dealt with in science before. Based on the oral information we received from the Bishop's Palace in Vršac, these tiled stoves were delivered to the Palace of the bishops of Caransebeș and Vršac about 110 years ago from Timisoara⁷, which means that they were certainly commissioned for this Palace during the episcopate of Gavriilo Zmejanović who was at the time the Bishop of Vršac (1896–1920). This information can further be supported by the data from the literature that during the time of Bishop Zmejanović, the Bishop's Palace in Vršac received its present-day lavish architectural appearance executed in the spirit of eclecticism (1904), as well as that it was equipped with appropriate luxury furniture.⁸ Gavriilo Zmejanović was very learned and had a very sophisticated taste, which is indirectly evidenced by the presence of the white tile stoves in the Palace and their decoration. The Bishop's Palace in Vršac also treasures a representative portrait of this bishop, the work of the painter Hirsch, from 1910, executed at the time when the tiled stoves with dolphin motifs were brought to the Vršac Palace.⁹ Gavriilo Zmejanović was born

7 I warmly thank father Nedeljko Vasiljević for this information.

8 Еп. С. Вуковић, *Српски јерарси*, 106–107; 3. Туркан, *Владичански двор Епархије Банатске: Српска православна Епархија банатска – Вршац*, Вршац, 2007, 11, 14.

9 Туркан, *Владичански двор Епархије Банатске*, 28.

in a priestly family in Srem in the mid-19th century. He graduated from the Orthodox Seminary in Sremski Karlovci, and then graduated from the Academy of Economics in Altenburg. He became a monk in the monastery of Krušedol. He performed the duty of a military priest, then the head of the monastery of Krušedol, and in 1895 he became the mandatary, and in the following year the bishop of the eparchy of Vršac. He performed this function for the next fifteen years, until his retirement in 1920. In 1902, he was unanimously elected Serbian patriarch at the Serbian Church Council in Karlovci.¹⁰ Since he was a man of trust, the Council Committee at one point in the early 1890s entrusted Gavriilo Zmejanović with the supervision of church's and people's goods. The bishop was first in hostility, and then in cooperation with the members of the Radical Party in Vršac, so in that way he was engaged in the political life of the Serbian people.¹¹ As we can see from this brief account of the life of Bishop Gavriilo Zmejanović, he was a very powerful and influential person of his time, who, according to all the abovesaid, was suitable to work and live in the most representative edifice of the Serbian ethnic group in the Habsburg monarchy – the bishop's residence. Serbian baroque bishop's palaces had an important place in the religious and political program of the Serbian church.¹² The chambers on the first floor were intended for the bishop's private and public life and were the most representative chambers in the Palace. The white tiled stoves with dolphins that are the subject of the present paper are located precisely in these chambers.

TILED STOVES IN THE BISHOP'S PALACE IN VRŠAC

In different chambers of the Bishop's Palace in Vršac, there are different tiled stoves of different colors. In the most solemn chambers of the Palace, the tiled stoves are made of white ceramics, as is the case with the bishop's residence in Sremski Karlovci.¹³ The decoration of these white tiled stoves is different. Some tiled stoves are decorated with representations of dolphins, but not all of them. Here we will consider only those tiled stoves which are decorated with dolphin motifs. The very white color of the tiled stove and the representations of dolphins indicate their solemn and noble note, which we will discuss later in the following lines. The surface of these tiled stoves is covered with plates or ceramic blocks assembled into one whole (Figs. 2–4). In the area with the most lavish decoration in the central part of the tiled stove, where the symbolism of the motifs is at its peak, the connection between the tiles almost escapes notice (Fig. 3). At first glance, it can be seen that these tiled stoves are a very high quality work of an experienced artist, whose name is still unknown.¹⁴ The decoration of the tiled stoves is executed in semi-relief on the front part, and the contours of this decoration

¹⁰ Политика, Београд, 16. октобар 1932. године.

¹¹ Д. Руварац, *Владика Гаврило Змејановић и војвођански радикали. Прилог к историји народно-црквено-аутономне борбе у Митрополији Карловачкој*, Сремски Карловци, 1925, 3–22.

¹² On this important role v. Д. Медаковић, „Српски митрополијски дворови у XVIII веку”, у: *Барок код Срба*, Загреб – Београд – Нови Сад, 1988, 19–205; М. Тимотијевић, „Архијерејске резиденције”, 469–479.

¹³ М. Шпановић, *Саборни храм и Ризница музеја Српске православне цркве у Сремским Карловцима*, Сремски Карловци, 2015, 51.

¹⁴ As we already mentioned above, white tiles stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac are not mentioned in previous bibliography, but there is still an open possibility that some data concerning these tiled stoves can be found in the archives of the cities of Timisoara and of Bela Crkva, which remains to be investigated.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

are highlighted in gold color. The height of the tiled stoves is about two meters. The tiled stoves are extremely well preserved.¹⁵

The central part of the decoration of the tiled stoves is occupied by a vase with fruits and flowers on a pedestal from which numerous stylized leaves with flowers spring, which dominate its decoration (Fig. 3). At the very bottom of the whole composition, at the base of the vase, symmetrically placed dolphins with their tails facing each other are shown (Figs. 3–5). They are depicted in a special way so that they form both a part of the vase decoration and an integral part of the floral motifs. The back of the dolphins' body and their tails actually form a floral ornament that springs from the vase. Dolphins have open mouths, large eyes with an accentuated, astonishing gaze, nostrils and the upper part of the mouth. Although this is a characteristic iconography of dolphins, which we would characterize as a kind of "floral mimicry", at first glance, due to the pronounced stylization, one can assume that here other animals are shown. However, these are undoubtedly dolphins. The peculiarity of this type of representation is the fusion or uniformity of dolphin bodies and floral motifs – their fins in the area above the head and below it and their bodies are in fact leaves, while the ends of their twisted tails form circular flowers. The entire field around the dolphins is covered with short, parallel, straight lines of golden color.

Below the relief with dolphins is a place for inserting firewood, with a small metal door, which roughly occupies one third of the height of the tiled stove (Fig. 2). This small door is flanked by garlands, and above them is another garland with two wreaths framed in an irregularly shaped field, whose edges as well as the edges of the central

¹⁵ Unfortunately, we do not know the final number of the tiled stoves bearing the motifs of dolphins, but there are at least two of them, having such an embellishment.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

field with dolphins are richly profiled. Under this door for inserting firewood, there is another, even smaller door, behind which is a compartment where ashes collect.

The central field of irregular geometric shape with dolphins and floral motifs is surmounted by a garland of two wreaths, which completes the decoration of the middle part of the tiled stove, and the entire central field is crowned with a large circular wreath (Figs. 2–3). At the very top of the tiled stove there is an urn from which the wreaths slope downwards (Fig. 2). On each side of the urn are motifs in the form of upright globular inflorescences.

All the edges of the tiled stove are richly profiled. The lower part of the tiled stove, where the door of the firewood is, has on both sides pilasters with volutes on top. The central field of the tiled stove also has profiled pilasters on the sides, and they are more richly decorated, in accordance with the significance of this part of the tiled stove, so their floral decoration extends from the top of the pillar downwards, occupying two thirds of the height of the tiled stove. Both the edges of the central field and the field with the wreath above the door for the firewood in the lower part of the tiled stove are profiled several times, more precisely five times. In order to better understand the appearance of dolphins on tiled stoves in the Bishop's residence in Vršac, in order to gain insight into the mental picture of all the motifs on them, several phenomena need to be examined. First of all, we will briefly look at the phenomenon of tiled stoves, their function and the importance of their study in the context of European culture. Then we will focus on the dolphin motif throughout the history, as well as the specific motif of stylized dolphins which appears on the tiled stoves in Vršac. We will list analogies and analyze the broader context of the dolphin motif in fireplaces as heating devices and its accompanying elements; then we will briefly consider the phenomenon of urns and garlands depicted on the white tiled stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac along with dolphins, as well as the appearance of these motifs in the context of the decoration of tiled stoves.

TILED STOVES THROUGH HISTORY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF TILED STOVES IN VRŠAC

Tiled stoves have been used for heating since ancient times and have played a very important role in the past.¹⁶ The very place where the fire was lit represented the

¹⁶ W. Bernan, *History and Art of Warming and Ventilating Rooms and Buildings*, Vol. I, London, 1845.

heart of the house – the hearth (fireplace).¹⁷ Today, the man has lost his relationship with nature that he once had, so he views objects and events around him differently. In the times when the modern type of heating did not exist, tiled stoves were of exceptional importance. Tiled stoves use a relatively high degree of heat produced by burning wood, and they also have the important property of gradually emitting heat, providing comfort. Apart from historical sources and archeological material, the use of tiled stoves and fireplaces for heating purposes is also evidenced by various works of art, of which medieval miniatures stand out, which provide valuable artistic evidence of their use (e. g. The Breviary of Queen Isabella of Castile, 1480, British Library Add MS 18851, fol. 1v;¹⁸ Egerton MS 1147, fol. 6r).¹⁹

Apart from the aspect of heating, the consideration of the tiled stoves in Vršac is also important from the broader aspect of cultural transfer.²⁰ As luxury items, they represented imports from Europe. In addition to their basic function of space heating, tiled stoves in general, both in the private and public sense, represented a very important status symbol and a reflection of the standards of stove owners.²¹ The status and standards of the tiled stoves' owners were reflected by the dimensions of the tiled stove, their shape, color, quality of workmanship, as well as the motifs shown on them. As part of material culture, tiled stoves often played an important role in constructing identities, representing the identity of their commissioners, mostly the elite who ordered them, but in some cases also people who built their identities by associating with the elite.²² Generally speaking, tiled stoves, including those in the Bishop's Residence in Vršac, as well as other objects, were markers of intangible elements of identity, social ties and power ties.²³ They were placed in public spaces, such as ceremonial audience halls, dining halls, where the owners of the estate welcomed their guests or allies. These were the chambers in which private and public functions overlapped.²⁴ Precisely because they were located in such chambers, tiled stoves often occupied a central or very noticeable position in the chamber, and heraldic motifs and emblems that referred to their owner played a special role and were visible to everyone.²⁵

The bishops who managed the eparchy of Vršac had a wide selection of motifs and topics available when they ordered the white tiled stoves. For example, on medieval

17 K. Matesz, *Masonry Heaters: Designing, Building, and Living with a Piece of the Sun*, Vermont, 2010, 3–4.

18 http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_18851_fso01r [accessed on March 24th 2021].

19 <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&ILLID=2157> [accessed on March 24th 2021].

20 For this phenomenon v. D. Gaimster, "The Baltic Ceramic Market 1200–1600: Measuring Hanseatic Cultural Transfer and Resistance", in: *Forging European Identities, 1400–1700*, ed. H. Roodenburg, Cambridge, 2007, 30–58.

21 М. Тимотијевић, „Удобност породичне приватности”, у: М. Поповић и др., *Историја приватној живоји у Срба*, Клио, Београд, 2011, 334.

22 W. De Clercq, J. Dumolyn, J. Haemers, "‘Vivre Noblement’: Material Culture and Elite Identity in Late Medieval Flanders", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38/1 (Cambridge, MA), 2007 (Summer), 22–29, 27–28.

23 De Clercq, Dumolyn, Haemers, *op. cit.*, 22.

24 De Clercq, Dumolyn, Haemers, *op. cit.*, 26.

25 De Clercq, Dumolyn, Haemers, *op. cit.*, 26. On this occasion, we do not have the opportunity to examine whether the tiled stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac have in some places heraldic motifs or coats of arms on the tiles, which is left for further investigation. One can assume with high possibility that, following the example of the tiled stoves in the Sremski Karlovci, these tiled stoves from Vršac could also have special heraldic features; cf. Шпановић, *Саборни храм и Ризница*, 51.

tilled stoves and on the tiled stoves of recent times, various themes and motifs were displayed depending on the motives and wishes of the commissioner, and in some cases, tiled stoves also represented gifts. Such motifs were: floral motifs, coats of arms, buildings, battles of rulers, portraits of rulers, various real and fantastic animals – lions, dragons, eagles, snakes, the queen of naiads, and sometimes entire pagan or biblical and other stories.²⁶ In order to indicate the reasons for the appearance of dolphins on tiled stoves in Vršac, we will first outline the development of the representations of dolphins through history, and then the iconographic type of dolphins present on the tiled stoves in Vršac.

THE MOTIF OF THE DOLPHIN THROUGH HISTORY

As the man has always been in touch with the sea, strongly relying on it, thus, dolphins, as the indispensable inhabitants of the sea, very early became a motif present in art. The oldest representations of these animals appear in the art of the Minoan period, and later they occur in Greek art and Roman art, which are of particular importance for the formation of this motif.²⁷ When it comes to later periods, the dolphin is an important and frequent motif in early Christian art, while Justinian's rule (527–565) appears to be the last period in which dolphins regularly occur in Byzantine art.²⁸ After the 6th century dolphins occur only sporadically on miniatures of manuscripts and even less frequently on works of applied art or elsewhere.²⁹ During the Middle Ages, this motif is quite rare, although it has not completely disappeared. On the other hand, in Renaissance art, the dolphin motif, under the strong influence of antiquity, was thriving and appeared often.³⁰ The tendency of depicting dolphins in different art media continues in later periods, where the dolphin has its established place.³¹

The iconography of dolphins on tiled stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac relies in a very refined manner on the visual tradition of the previous, mentioned periods. The

26 М. Бајаловић Хаџи-Пешић, „Угарски пећњаци у београдском средњовековном двору”, *Годишњак града Београда* 23 (Београд), 1976, 19–32; М. Бирташевић, *Средњовековна керамика*, Београд, 1970, 23–26; В. Бикић, *Средњовековна керамика Београда*, Археолошки институт САНУ, Београд, 1994, 102–108; А. Фостиков, *Занатлиство у средњовековној Србији* (докторска теза), Београд, 2016, 123; Matesz, *Masonry Heaters*, fig. 2.2–2.3, 2.6 pass.

27 A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos. A Comparative Study of the Successive Stages of the Early Cretan Civilization as Illustrated by the Discoveries*. T. II/2, London, 1928, 502, fig. 306; R. B. Koehl, „A Marinescape Floor from the Palace at Knossos”, *American Journal of Archaeology* 90/4 (Boston), 1986 (Oct.), 407–417, fig. 1–3; E. Stebbins, *The Dolphin in the Literature and Art of Greece and Rome*, The George Banta Publishing Company, Menasha (WI), 1929, 19–58, 97–129; А. Гавриловић, „Плиткорелефни украс мермерних плоча на Градској фонтани у Хераклеји Линкестис (562) и његово значење”, *Пајримониум* 18 (Скопље), 2020, 281–293.

28 A. Gavrilović, „The Representations of Dolphins on the Inlaid Opus Sectile Panels above the Imperial Door in the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and their meaning”, in: *Archæology of the World of Changes. Late Roman and Early Byzantine Architecture, Sculpture and Landscapes. Selected Papers from the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Belgrade, 22–27 August 2016) in memoriam Claudiae Barsanti*, Ed. D. Moreau et al., Oxford, 2020, 340–341.

29 Gavrilović, *op. cit.*, 340; Гавриловић, „Плиткорелефни украс мермерних плоча”, 281–283, 284; G. B. De Rossi, „L'anello trovato nel sepolcro di Ademaro Vescovo di Angoulême ed il delfino simbolo di Cristo Salvatore”, *Bolletino di archeologia Cristiana*. Ser. 2, 1, 1870, 49–73.

30 M. Jacobsen et V. J. R. Price, „The Dolphin in Renaissance Art”, *Studies in Iconography* 9 (Kalamazoo), 1983, 31–56.

31 Ch. Avery, *A School of Dolphins*, London, 2009.

reasons for the appearance of this motif on the tiled stoves in Vršac are interwoven with earlier epochs from which they draw the inspiration. The conceptual design of dolphins in Vršac on the one hand is a combination of depictions of the dolphin motif which occur in Roman art, while on the other hand their stylization is an echo of Roman, medieval and Renaissance art.

STYLIZED DOLPHINS

Some of the earliest fourth-century examples of the motifs of stylized dolphins that stand at the crossroads between Pre-Christian and Christian art are found in the famous monument whose cult affiliation has not yet been determined with certainty – the church of Santa Constanza in Rome, whose founder was the daughter of Constantine the Great, Constanza (307/317–354).³² The representations of dolphins were numerous in this church. A large number of dolphins have been preserved, but a large number of them have also disappeared due to the course of time. The dome of this church once featured dolphins which form part of the floral vegetation. They once formed an integral part of an ideal landscape alongside numerous other terrestrial and aquatic animals. These frescoes in the dome are known to us thanks to the drawings from the later period.³³ In the church of Santa Constanza, the dolphins were painted in several different locations in the dome, in several different iconographic types. On the frescoes depicting the ideal landscape they were stylized in a characteristic way, thus resembling floral vegetation. A similar iconographic solution in terms of the interconnection between dolphins and floral motifs has been preserved in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna, where dolphins are shown in green, as the supporters of the entire repertoire of floral decoration in the eastern vault of the church (546–547).³⁴ More famous dolphins depicted in the same church, the ones which surround the busts of Christ and the apostles on the triumphal arch, are also done in green color with characteristic tails in the form of leaves.³⁵ Dolphins with florally stylized bodies also appear in the church of St. Sophia in Constantinople on the west wall of naos, above the Imperial Door, in a slightly different form – they are depicted tied to trident with a ribbon and tied to a plant.³⁶ As in the church of San Vitale, they do not appear in their natural color, but are shown green, resembling floral leaves, with tails in form of leaves.³⁷

This stylized type of the dolphin is also present in medieval manuscripts. As the typical example we would like to mention the Cyrillic initial “G” („Г”) in one of the first Serbian incunabula – “Psalter with Appendices”, printed by hieromonk

32 V. infra.

33 Å. Ringbom, “Dolphins and Mortar Dating – Santa Constanza Reconsidered”, in: R. Suominen-Kokkonen (ed.), *Songs of Ossian, Festschrift in Honour of Professor Bo Ossian Lindberg*, Helsinki, 2003, 22–42, fig. 8, 11–13.

34 H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion. Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature*, Oxford, 2012, Intro 1–2; on the repertoire of this floral vegetation v. A. Гаврилович, *Црква Бојородице Огнѣиѣрије у Пећкој ђаѣријаршији*, Пећ, 2018, 212–215; Гаврилович, „Плит-корелефни украс мермерних плоча”, сл. 9.

35 Maguire, *op. cit.*, Intro 1.

36 Gavrilović, “The Representations of Dolphins”, fig. 1.

37 There is a slight difference between the representations of dolphins in Hagia Sophia and in San Vitale: in San Vitale dolphins have orange tails, while in Hagia Sophia they have green tails.



Fig. 6

Makarije on September 22, 1495 in the Cetinje printing house of Đurađ Crnojević.³⁸ Within the square field of the mentioned initial, dolphins emerge from the floral vegetation and are completely steeped in it. The Cyrillic initial “G” („Г”) containing the representations of paired dolphins appear frequently in this book. On some folios it is highlighted in red color, while on others it is done in black color. In this psalter dolphins are illustrated next to initials or forming an integral part of them. Except for the position of dolphins facing each other, the dolphins flanking the initial “G” from the Psalter with Appendices (NLS I 41, fol. 8r; fig. 6) represent one of the most complete analogies for the dolphins executed on the tiled stoves in the Bishop’s Palace in Vršac – they are highly stylized, shown as if emerging from the leaves, with their tails forming flowers. The Cyrillic initial “K” is repeated in several places, sometimes in black color (fol. 87v), sometimes in red color (fol. 22v).³⁹ These late 15th-century initials “morphologically” originated from Renaissance art, as was previously correctly observed.⁴⁰ We would just add that such a practice of depicting dolphins was known in earlier art, albeit in a slightly different way. As another typical example of the stylized “floral” dolphins, we cite the “floral decoration” on the folio no. 61 from the book of the New Testament (beginning of the First Epistle to Timothy), executed in pencil and watercolor that accompanies the entire folio and partially frames the Latin initial “P” (the initial of the name of the Apostle Paul) made in the technique of woodcarving by Hans Leonard Scheuflein in 1523 in Augsburg.⁴¹ The decoration done in pencil and watercolor with dolphins dates back to a similar period. We singled out these dolphins, because they represent an excellent analogy for the dolphins in the Bishop’s Palace in Vršac and stand in line with the previously mentioned example. At the top of the folio is a cupid riding a dolphin. A vine springs from the mouth of a dolphin, as well as from the mouth of an angel beneath it.

Representations of dolphins that occur on the tiled stoves in Vršac also occur on the furniture, of which on this occasion we single out the Renaissance bipartite bahut, executed in south Germany.⁴² This bahut is very richly decorated, and

38 Љ. Пузовић, М. Лазић, *Између традиције и иновације. 520 година од прве ћирилске књије штампане на српскословенском језику. Каџалої изложбе*, Народна библиотека Србије, Београд, 2014, 31, 66–67 (кат. бр. 15, сл. 15).

39 Cf. supra.

40 Љ. Пузовић, М. Лазић, *Између традиције и иновације*, 66.

41 L. Stauch, “Delphin”, in: O. Schmitt et al., *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte, Band 3*, Stuttgart Druckenmüller, Stuttgart, 1954, Abb. 5.

42 J. Miller, *Le Mobilier Ancien et Contemporain*, Paris, 2006, 31.

dolphins form part of its decoration as well as floral motifs and urns. As on the tiled stoves in Vršac, the dolphins have their tails turned towards each other, except that, unlike them, they are placed vertically, in accordance with the space available on the edges of the bahut. They also have pronounced upper part of the mouth in the form of leaves and stylized tails in the same form. The iconography of the urn with fluting corresponds to the iconography of the urn in Vršac. Unlike the dolphins from Vršac, on the bahut, vines spring from the mouths of the dolphins, in the same manner as shown on the folio of the mentioned Renaissance Bible from 1523.

The motif of two dolphins with three-dimensionally intertwined bodies can also be found on candlesticks. Here we mention a gilded Rococo candlestick from 1758, from Temple Newsam House, Leeds, where the dolphins have the same color as the leaves below them.⁴³ In a general sense, this candlestick and the similar ones offer possibilities for the reconstruction of candlesticks with dolphins from earlier periods which have not been preserved. These dolphins have prominent tails in the form of leaves, and like dolphins in Vršac, they have pronounced nostrils and upper part of the mouth.

Finally, one of the most representative examples of this kind of the dolphin motif is preserved in the church of Nea Moni on Chios, the endowment of the Byzantine emperor Constantine Monomachos (1042–1056) and it dates back to a much later period.⁴⁴ In the narthex of this church, on a proskinitarion dating from the year 1876, two dolphins are depicted entangled and steeped in vegetation, facing each other. They are shown symmetrically in heraldic posture, which is a common practice for this type of their representation. The particular importance of this proskinitarion lies in the fact that it reveals both the meaning and the context of dolphins entangled in the floral vegetation. The dolphins in Nea Moni are shown in the iconographic context similar to the context of the dolphins represented in Vršac. The proskinitarion is partially preserved and it consists of two parts: the left part with two dolphins and floral elements with a mask below them, and the right segment consisting of two pillars with the timpanon at the top of it. The center of the timpanon is decorated with the vase which iconographically matches the one in Vršac. This kind of decoration, which represents a complete analogy for the dolphin motif in Vršac, clearly shows that this kind of dolphin decoration forms the image of paradise, which is appropriate for the Bishop's Residence in Vršac and which reveals the highly sophisticated taste of its commissioner, bishop Zmejanović.⁴⁵

In addition to the above-said examples, we will briefly point out that dolphins usually form part of the decoration of fountains, since, like fountains, they are deeply connected with water on a physical as well as on a symbolic level. This practice of depicting on fountains the subjects directly connected with water, such as dolphins, represented the legacy of ancient art.⁴⁶ Therefore, dolphins are often depicted as the decoration of both real fountains and fountains depicted in works of art.⁴⁷ Apart from water, dolphins are firmly associated with the element of fire and light and its symbolism. As this connection is important in the context of our

43 *Op. cit.*, 101.

44 X. Μπουρά, *Η Νέα Μονή της Χίου. Ιστορία και αρχιτεκτονική*, Αθήναι, 1981, 119–120, εικ. 123.

45 For this kind of floral vegetation see: Гавриловић, „Плиткорелефни украс мермерних плоча”, сл. 9; Гавриловић, *Црква Бојородице Одијиштрије*, 213.

46 On the mentioned connection between the themes related to water and fountains, v. Гавриловић, „Плиткорелефни украс мермерних плоча”, 285–286, 289–290 et pass.

47 For the examples of the fountains v. Avery, *The School of Dolphins*, 58, 61, 107, 112 et pass.

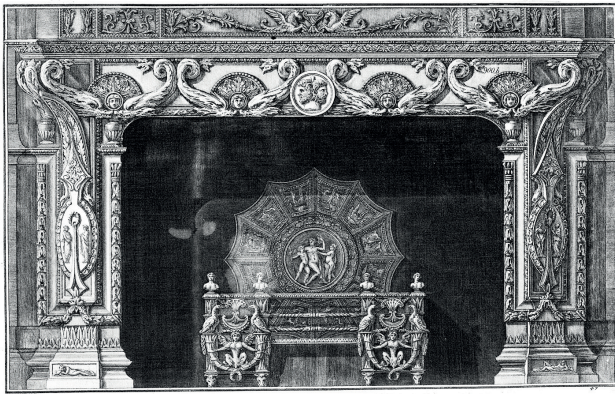


Fig. 7

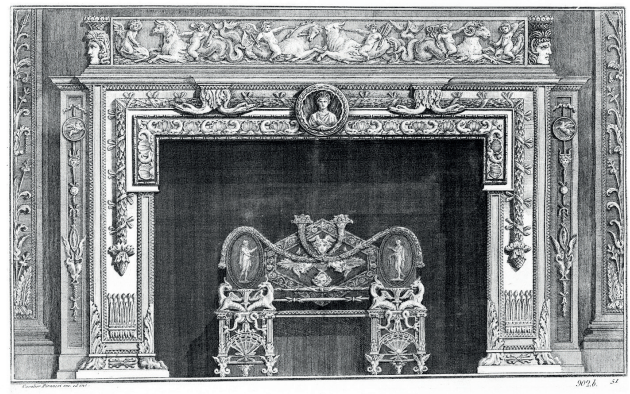


Fig. 8

paper, we will consider it carefully. In other words, in order to make the context of dolphin motifs on tiled stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac clearer, we will clarify the conceptual link that connects dolphins and tiled stoves, which is the aim of this paper – to elucidate the context and reasons for the placement of the motif of dolphins on the tiled stoves.

THE DOLPHIN MOTIFS AS A FIREPLACE DECORATION AND ITS ACCOMPANYING ELEMENTS

In the past, the man tried to make the most of the heat he received from the sun, which meant life. Fire is also firmly connected with the sun; it represents the first source of artificial lighting, linked to both heating and light. Tiled stoves themselves were a real source of heat and light, like the sun. During the winter, in the moments when the real sun was hidden behind the clouds, tiled stoves represented the real and symbolic sun, which was heating and “illuminating” the chamber instead of it.⁴⁸ The fire itself, burning in tiled stoves, visually represented the sun through a transparent opening.⁴⁹ Precisely for this reason, the motif of the sun in the form of an anthropomorphic sphere with radially placed rays was often shown on tiled stoves and other heating devices.⁵⁰ The dolphin is a prominent symbol of light and as such it stands in strong conceptual connection with the Greek God of light, Apollo, so it is often depicted next to this God. Some of the most representative examples of the depictions of dolphins on fireplace mantels can be seen on the etchings made by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), where dolphins are present in large numbers.⁵¹ As Piranesi's works show, dolphins often appear as motifs on fireplace mantels, in different contexts, located either on the fireplace mantel itself or on the pilasters that flank the fireplace, but invariably in pairs, symmetrically and heraldically arranged, their heads or tails facing each other (Fig. 7, 8).⁵² They are often depicted as motifs of the “decoration” of fireplace equipment or

⁴⁸ Matesz, *Masonry Heaters*, 19.

⁴⁹ See the previous footnote.

⁵⁰ E.g. v. Edgerton, Samuel, Y. “Heat and Style: Eighteenth-Century House Warming by Stoves”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 20/1 (Chicago), 1961 (Mart), fig. 1.

⁵¹ See the following footnote.

⁵² G. B. Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell' architettura Egizia, e Toscana*, Roma, 1769, T. 7, 8, 22, 23, 42, 47, 51.

tilled stoves, as they are shown on tiled stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac.⁵³ Thus, in addition to being "the decoration" of the fireplace mantel, dolphins were also executed on andirons, which too were executed in the form of paired dolphins.⁵⁴ To burn wood, the fireplace was furnished with an andiron, which was a bar of iron stretching across the hearth. It was used to raise the ends of the pieces of woods that were burning. Andirons have different shapes. When andirons were executed in the form of dolphins they usually consisted of two pieces, that is, two iron bars with heraldically arranged and uprightly positioned dolphins. Sometimes two dolphins were executed in a single iron piece – a single andiron piece. It is interesting to note that an early mention of this article of ancient household furniture is found in an assessment of the fifteenth of the moveables made in Colchester in 1290.⁵⁵

URN AND GARLANDS

In accordance with all that has been said, let us add a few remarks concerning two other motifs present on the tiled stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac: the urn and the garland. In the context of the conceptual connection between the dolphin motif and the urn in general, it should also be noted that the urn itself had the function of burning, and that a fire was burning in it, as well as in tiled stoves.⁵⁶ This connection with the fire can be made when observing the large urn executed as the decoration of the uppermost part of the tiled stove in Vršac. Precisely due to this burning function of the urn, which stays in line with the function of the tiled stoves, certain tiled stoves were also "decorated" with fire urns on their tops. In antiquity, dolphins were also usually depicted on urns, often in the same iconographical settings as on the tiled stoves in Vršac.⁵⁷ Urns were often an integral part of the decoration of tiled stoves, since urns burn, and as well as tiled stoves, contain ashes. Along with dolphins, urns and garlands are also integral motifs of ancient and early Christian art.⁵⁸

⁵³ See. the next footnote.

⁵⁴ *The Fifth Avenue Art Galleries... Will Sell the Colonial Furniture, Mirrors, Art Objects... etc, Removed from the Famous Singleton Mansion, "Blackwoods", Near Sumpter [i.e. Sumter], South Carolina...*, 1905, cat. n. 526; P. Thornton, M. Tomlin, *The Furnishing and Decoration of Ham House*, London, 1980, 52; R. M. Kovels, T. H. Kovel, *Kovels' Antiques and Collectibles Price List 2002*, Three Rivers Press, 2001, 254; R. M. Kovels, T. H. Kovel, *Kovels' Antiques and Collectibles Price List 2007*, Random House Information Group, 2006, 298.

⁵⁵ Bernan, *On the History and Art of Warming*, 97.

⁵⁶ As a typical example we mention the study for the fire urn with the motifs of eagles from the repository of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is the work of anonymous French artist from the end of the 18th century (1770–1790), v. https://ezproxy.nb.rs:2213/stable/community.18630578?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=undefined&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3D-fire%2Burn%26filter%3D&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A1c84646ef63ce5a15dab2d1487a19a95&seq=1 [accessed on March 25th 2021].

⁵⁷ M.-C. Beaulieu, "The Dolphin in Classical Mythology and Religion", in: *Animals in Greek and Roman Religion and myth*, ed. P. A. Johnston, A. Mastrocinque, S. Papaioannou, Cambridge, 2016, 248, fig. 3.

⁵⁸ W. Altmann, *Die römischen Grabaltäre der Kaiserzeit*, Berlin, 1905, 59–67 (Ch. VI); Ph. De Montebello, K. Howard (ed.), *The Vatican. Spirit and Art of Christian Rome*, New York, 1983, 177; Ringbom, "Dolphins and Mortar Dating", fig. 5.

CONCLUSION

When used as “ornaments” which form part of the decoration of the tiled stoves, fireplace mantels, pilasters of some other kind of heating devices, dolphins are always depicted in pairs for the sake of harmony, beauty and symmetry. In his introductory text dedicated to the decorations of chimneypieces, Giovanni Battista Piranesi also points to the importance of harmony in them and their ornaments:

“As they [the chimney-pieces] are placed, I may say, to harmonize with the rest of the cabinet, of which they are part, they ought to present to us an elegant and pleasing symmetry. It is for this reason precisely that in my designs of chimneys, I have not only given that of the chimney, but likewise of the ornaments of the walls against which it is placed”.⁵⁹

This kind of elegant and pleasing symmetry, noble beauty and harmony can be observed on the tiled stoves in the Bishop's Palace in Vršac as well. They are placed here to harmonize with the rest of the Bishop's Cabinet which they are part of.

As we can see, although dolphins certainly represent the “decoration” of the tiled stoves in Vršac, they do not constitute their “mere” ornament. On the contrary, their presence on the tiled stoves relies on the deeply rooted and centuries lasting tradition which gives these depictions of dolphins an aura of exclusivity, sophistication and nobility. Their presence in the Bishop's Palace is caused by two main reasons: firstly, they bear strong Christian meaning, representing the ideal image of paradise; secondly, they are symbolically closely connected with the heat of the tiled stoves. Their presence reveals that the commissioner of such kind of decoration the Bishop of Vršac, Gavrilko Zmejanović – was a highly learned person, able to understand and recognize the significance, the deep symbolism and the sophistication of representations of dolphins, and chose such an “ornament” for the tiled stoves in his own Cabinet in the Bishop's Palace of Vršac.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1: Bishop's Palace, Vršac, 1756–1763 (photo: Anđela Gavrilović, 2019)

Владичански двор, Вршац, 1756–1763 (фотографија: Анђела Гавриловић, 2019)

2: White tiled stove with the motifs of dolphins, the Bishop's Palace, the Bishop's Cabinet, Vršac, c. 1910 (photo: Anđela Gavrilović, 2019)

Бела каљева пећ са мотивима делфина, Владичански двор, Владичански салон, Вршац, око 1910 (фотографија: Анђела Гавриловић, 2019)

3: White tiled stove with the motifs of dolphins, the Bishop's Palace, the Bishop's Cabinet, Vršac, c. 1910, detail, central register (photo: Anđela Gavrilović, 2019)

Бела каљева пећ са мотивима делфина, Владичански двор, Владичански салон, Вршац, детаљ, централни регистар, око 1910 (фотографија: Анђела Гавриловић, 2019)

4: White tiled stove with the motifs of dolphins, the Bishop's Palace, the Bishop's Cabinet, Vršac, c. 1910, detail, dolphins (photo: Anđela Gavrilović, 2019)

Бела каљева пећ са мотивима делфина, Владичански двор, Владичански салон, Вршац, детаљ, делфини, око 1910 (фотографија: Анђела Гавриловић, 2019)

5: White tiled stove with the motifs of dolphins, the Bishop's Palace, the Bishop's Cabinet, Vršac, c. 1910, detail, dolphins (photo: Anđela Gavrilović, 2019)

Бела каљева пећ са мотивима делфина, Владичански двор, Владичански салон, Вршац, детаљ, делфини, око 1910 (фотографија: Анђела Гавриловић, 2019)

6: Psalter with Appendices, Belgrade, NSL I 41, September 22nd 1495, Cetinje, the printing house of Đurađ Crnojević, Cyrillic Initial “G” with dolphin motives (photo: Љ. Пузовић, М. Лазивић, Између

59 G. B. Piranesi, “Ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell' architettura Egizia, e Toscana”, [“Apologetic Essay in Defense of the Egyptian and Tuscan Architecture”], in: *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un ragionamento apologetic in difesa dell' architettura Egizia, e Toscana*, Roma, 1769, 7–8.

традиције и иновације. 520 година од прве ћирилске књиге штампане на српскословенском језику. Каталог изложбе, Народна библиотека Србије, Београд, 2014, 31)

Псалтир с последовањем, Београд, НБСИ 41, 22. септембар 1495, Цетиње, штампарија Ђурђа Црнојевића, ћирилични иницијал „Г” са мотивима делфина (фотографија: Љ. Пузовић, М. Лазић, *Између традиције и иновације. 520 година од прве ћирилске књиге штампане на српскословенском језику*. Каталог изложбе, Народна библиотека Србије, Београд, 2014, 31).

7: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, The Design of Fireplace Mantel, etching (photo: G. B. Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell' architettura Egizia, e Toscana*, Stamperia di Generoso Salomoni, Roma, 1769, T. 47).

Ђовани Батиста Пиранези, скица камина, графика (фотографија: G. B. Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell' architettura Egizia, e Toscana*, Stamperia di Generoso Salomoni, Roma, 1769, T. 47).

8: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, The Design of Fireplace Mantel, etching (photo: G. B. Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell' architettura Egizia, e Toscana*, Stamperia di Generoso Salomoni, Roma, 1769, T. 51).

Ђовани Батиста Пиранези, скица камина, графика (фотографија: G. B. Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell' architettura Egizia, e Toscana*, Stamperia di Generoso Salomoni, Roma, 1769, T. 51).

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Анђела Ђ. ГАВРИЛОВИЋ

ПРИЛОГ ПРОУЧАВАЊУ ДЕКОРАЦИЈЕ КАЉЕВИХ ПЕЋИ У СРБИЈИ – КАЉЕВЕ ПЕЋИ У САЛОНУ ВЛАДИКЕ У ВЛАДИЧАНСКОМ ДВОРУ У ВРШЦУ

Резиме: Владичански двор у Вршцу представља једну од најрепрезентативнијих епископских резиденција Карловачке митрополије (сл.1). Подигао га је образован, предузимљив и веома способан владика вршачки Јован Георгијевић, а он је грађен од 1756. до 1763. године. Прву обнову двор је доживео за време патријарха Јосифа Рајачића између 1833. и 1843. године, а у XX веку ово велелепно здање је доживело још једну обнову за време епископовања Гаврила Змејановића (1896–1920), када је двор опремљен луксузним намештајем. Двор у својој ризници чува бројне драгоцености уметничке природе. Осим репрезентативних портрета владика који су овде столovali, овај двор, тачније Владичански салон, краше и беле каљеве пећи, које су украшене необичним представама делфина (сл. 2–5). Како ове пећи нису раније представљале предмет пажње истраживача, у раду су оне најпре описане, оквирно датоване у време око 1910. године, а детаљно су представљене и представе делфина. У раду се у циљу разоткривања разлога њиховог постављања на фронтални део каљевих пећи разматра иконографија делфина, историјски развој оваквог типа представљања кроз различите периоде и у различитим техникама. Једна од важних аналогија је иницијал „Г” из „Псалтира с последовањем” штампан на Цетињу 1495. године (сл. 6). Између осталог, у истом смислу, у раду се обрађује мотив делфина у различитим уметничким медијима, а посебан акценат је стављен на декорацију камина, односно цртеже Ђованија Батисте Пиранезија (сл. 7, 8). У чланку се такође говори о каљевим пећима, њиховом историјату и појави у Европи и Србији новијег времена. На основу изнетог, закључује се да је појава делфина на каљевим пећима резултат рафинираности средине која је каљеве пећи поручила, плод рафинираности духовних стремљења владике Гаврила Змејановића који је у Владичанском двору столовао, радио и обитавао, као и плод дуговеке класичне и хришћанске традиције која сеже у далеку прошлост.

Кључне речи: Владичански двор, Вршац, Гаврило Змејановић, поплочане пећи, декорација, делфини, значење.